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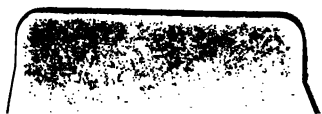
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Charlie's Fall.

CHARLIE CLEMENT;

OR,

THE BOY FRIEND.



Augusta admiring her new clothes.

LONDON:
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.,
BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1868.

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CHARLIE CLEMENT;

OR,

THE BOY FRIEND.

By AUNT FRIENDLY.

AUTHOR OF "TIMID LUCY," "LITTLE JOSEY,"
ETC., ETC.

WITH COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS.



LONDON:
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CHARLIE CLEMENT.

CHAPTER I.

AN ICY MORNING.

ICE ! ice ! everywhere ! Ice on the ground, ice on the trees, ice on the fences—the very houses coated with ice ! So it was at Meedville, one Sunday morning in December, yet the church-bell rang out as cheerily as if it were the merry month of May, and the gate to the churchyard was thrown as wide open as if the broad walk were not one sheet of treacherous ice, promising a downfall to any who dared to venture upon it. A heavy mist was in the air, and there was a continual rattling sound, as the trees dropped morsels of their frozen coating, when their branches waved in the wind.

Would anybody venture out on such a day? The sexton seemed to think so, for he pulled the bell-rope as if he was sure that he was accomplishing a good end.

At Meedville there were some churchgoers who never stayed at home for wind or weather, and Mrs. Berridge and her family were among them. The good lady herself, and her two daughters, would as soon have thought of putting out their own eyes as neglecting the sound of that well-known bell. In their seats they were sure to be when the minister entered the chancel; that is, their bodies were sure to be there, wherever else their minds might chance to be wandering.

On this particular morning they had a stranger with them; not one of the tall, dignified men, or the fashionably-dressed ladies who occasionally appeared there, but a lad in his grey roundabout—a boy, evidently not more than fourteen years of age.

The stranger seemed to think himself enough of a grown-up gentleman to walk up the middle aisle in advance of the party, and throw wide open the door of the third pew, for Mrs. Berridge and her daughters to pass in. This feat Miss Augusta Berridge accomplished without any injury to her garments in squeezing through the narrow passage. Little Annie followed, imitating her sister's movements with great care, and perching herself at length on the seat, with a satisfied air, as if the business of the morning was over, and now she had nothing to do but look about her and see who was at church.

Annie had moved her head from side to side, and looked at all the people down one aisle, and had actually counted twenty, when she noticed that her cousin Charlie was still on his knees. What could he be about all this time?

It did not once cross Annie's mind that

Charles Clement was entering, for the first time, a church where he expected to worship for a whole year, and that he might feel this an occasion for special prayer. She could not know that he was asking that he might ever find his Heavenly Father near him in that humble sanctuary, and that he might be himself a faithful hearer of the messages which the appointed clergyman should bring to his soul.

Of course, Annie Berridge could not know all this ; she did not even guess it, for to serious thoughts she was herself a stranger. Moreover, she had not in the least suspected that her cousin Charlie was of what she called "a religious turn." She had not seen him, so far as she could remember, till the evening before, and then he had been so merry and agreeable, that she fancied he must always be in a frolic.

Charlie Clement knew that there was "a

time to laugh," and that this was not a suitable time he plainly thought ; for when Augusta Berridge turned her face towards him, and gave it a comical, dolorous twist as the minister entered the chancel, there was a very grave look in his eye, instead of the answering smile she expected.

The service went on. Charlie did not see Augusta casting her quick glances over the congregation ; nor did he see that Mrs. Berridge's thoughts were far from the book on which her eyes were bent.

Mrs. Berridge had a respect for religion. She liked a devout manner in church. She wanted to set a good example ; but she had not come up to the Lord's house to praise Him for His mercies, and to call upon Him for forgiveness, and for that Holy Spirit He delights to bestow on all who ask it. Her service was vain, fair as it was in outside show.

For once there was a true worshipper in

Mrs. Berridge's pew. Augusta looked at her cousin Charles in astonishment. He seemed really interested in what he was about, and when the sermon began, he listened as if he wanted to hear ; he listened respectfully, like one who expected to be taught a lesson worth learning.

The young clergyman was by no means unattractive in appearance. There was a look of earnest thought about his face, but no traces of genial warmth, or of any kind of consciousness of the outer world. During the prayers this was forgotten, for he spoke with quiet simplicity ; but in the pulpit he seemed declaiming, rather than addressing the people on a matter of moment to them. His sermon was a fine essay on the beauty of divine truth, but seemed intended to reach no class of persons, and to produce no particular effect.

"Oh, how nice it is to get out into the fresh air !" exclaimed Augusta Berridge,

as she stepped from the church door.
“Dreadfully dull! Was it not, Charlie?”

Charlie was fairly startled by the sudden loud tones of his companion. A silence, that should have reproved, was his reply. He had been taught that there should be a reverent retirement from the house of God, as from the presence of a king; no noise in the ante-chamber, no rude haste in laying aside the garment of solemnity suited to such an audience.

“Oh, Cousin Charlie! Hold me up! I certainly shall fall!” said Annie, putting her foot timidly on the ice-covered steps.

The lad helped the little girl tenderly down, and then joined Mrs. Berridge and Augusta, who were waiting for him below.

“Isn’t he tiresome?—Mr. Mayer, I mean,” said Augusta, as they walked along.

“He cannot help it, my child. Poor young man! we must be patient with him. Nobody likes him, and I suppose he knows

it. For my part, I am sorry for him, though it is quite a trial to have such dull preaching," said the mother.

Charles looked up in astonishment, but said simply, "Has Mr. Mayer been long settled here?"

"Only half a year. The bishop recommended him, and the proprietors of the chapel accepted him. He stood high at the university; why I cannot imagine," was the reply.

"I should think he was a man of talent, and might be very agreeable in conversation," said Charles.

"Nobody knows much about that; he visits very little. He seems shy—uncommonly shy. I never could bear a bashful man," said Mrs. Berridge.

"I mean to go and see him," remarked Charlie; "I like to know my clergyman."

Augusta turned her sharp black eyes quickly upon Charlie, to see if he was

smiling, but he looked perfectly serious, and she began to laugh, saying.

“I think I see him going through the torture of your visit. First he rises, as if he had the cramp in his knees ; then out goes his arm, as if it were jerked out with an invisible string. Before you have time to fairly shake his hand, down it drops, and he looks you straight in the eyes, as if to ask you, what’s your business. May I go with you ?”

“No, no! But cousin, I really mean to go,” replied Charlie ; and so the conversation ended, as the family had reached Mrs. Berridge’s pleasant home.



CHAPTER II.

A BOYISH VISITOR.

CHARLES CLEMENT was the eldest son in a family of six, and his mother was a widow. It was not strange that he felt himself quite a man, as for three years he had been his mother's companion, and frequently her adviser. The younger children looked up to him as a remarkable person, and many of his schoolmates and friends were of the same opinion.

That Charlie was not at all diffident of his own powers, was plain from his decided step, and the particularly erect manner in which he carried his plump, but well-formed figure. There was nothing of pride or arrogance, however, in his air, and in his

round, cheerful face there was a bright, sunny expression, which seemed to promise a willingness to think kindly of others as well as of himself.

Charlie would have packed up his trunk, if occasion had required, and travelled to the Land's End alone, as composedly as if he were a person of forty. He had so long done the honours of his own home, and kept a watchful, protective eye upon his mother, that there was a kind of manliness about him uncommon in a lad of His age.

When he dressed himself on Monday morning, with particular care, before paying his intended visit to the curate, he had no idea that he was about doing a thing from which any boy would shrink.

He had no difficulty in finding the humble lodging of Mr. Mayer : humble, for though the people of Meedville expected a minister unequalled in talent and piety, his income

with the Church was merely a bare subsistence.

Charlie knocked twice before any notice was taken of his arrival. It was plain that it was Monday in every sense of the word in that establishment, a true washing-day, when all things must give way to the weekly purification. A little woman with a bonnet on, and a wet dress pinned up round her waist, at length made her appearance from the rear of the house. She opened her eyes with astonishment, when, instead of the supposed "fish-man," Master Charlie Clement stood before her, with his cap in hand.

"Is the Rev. Mr. Mayer at home?" said Charlie, with his usual composure.

"Yes—I don't know. Yes, I'll see," said the woman, in evident confusion; whether at her own lamentably moist condition, or at the unwonted appearance of a visitor at that time, on a Monday morning, it was hard to decide.

The woman of the bonnet disappeared at a side-door, without asking the stranger to walk in. Master Charlie, however, made bold to take a few steps into the hall, and there he awaited her return.

He had stood there just long enough to note the thread-bare condition of the faded carpet, and the paintless arms of the wooden chair, when, not the woman, but quite another person, appeared. A tall young man in a dressing-gown, came from the before-mentioned side-door, and looked inquiringly at Charlie.

Charlie did not at first recognize, in the person who stood before him, the Rev. Mr. Mayer of the preceding day. The young man was very pale, and a mass of dark hair was standing in wild confusion, straight off from his forehead, and his brown eyes stared absently, as if he had just been roused from sleep. The fact was, he had been deep in the composition of a sermon.

His head had been resting on his hands, and his fingers thrust into his hair, when he was called to see "some young chap at the door asking to see the minister."

"Is this the Rev. Mr. Mayer?" said Charlie, after a moment of doubtful silence.

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Mayer, struggling to keep a most appropriate "thirdly" for his sermon out of his mind, and to attend to the matter in hand.

"My name is Charles Clement," said the lad, stepping forward, and putting out his hand.

A name all unknown to fame, it seemed to be to Mr. Mayer. He did not see the offered hand, but said,

"Well, sir; what is it, this morning?"

"Perhaps I have come upon you at a busy time," said Charles, civilly.

"I *was* writing, but"—and the minister

looked inquiringly at the boy—"but I can attend to you now."

"I have no particular business—I can call at some other time," said Charlie, retiring.

Mr. Mayer gave a puzzled look at his visitor, and driving the "thirdly" fairly from his thoughts, said, pleasantly,

"Won't you walk in now?"

"I thank you, not this morning, sir," said Charlie, decidedly ; "but I should like to come again, for I want to know my clergyman."

As he spoke, he again put out his hand, and looked up frankly into Mr. Mayer's face.

Mr. Mayer took the offered hand, and said, shyly,

"Yes, come again ; I shall be glad to see you."

Another bow, and a pleasant "good morning" from Charles, and the interview was over.

Charles Clement was more amused than annoyed at the result of his proposed call on the rector. He had made a beginning, and was not disheartened.



CHAPTER III.

A STEP NEARER.

MRS. BERRIDGE had thought it necessary to introduce her nephew at the Academy where he was to be a pupil. Charlie would by no means have hesitated to appear there alone, but he cheerfully assented when his aunt proposed to accompany him.

Some domestic duties had kept her at home on Monday morning, and Charlie, as we have seen, took the opportunity to put in a wedge towards an acquaintance with his Curate.

If Mr. Mayer had been spoken of respectfully, the lad would have felt inclined to treat him with all due deference; indeed, he had been taught that a certain peculiar

politeness or reverence was due to those whose office it is to minister in spiritual things.

The light and unkind manner in which Mr. Mayer had been mentioned, had, however, called out a warmer feeling in Charlie Clement than might otherwise have been aroused. He resolved, for his part, to treat his clergyman with respect and affection, and to be by no means influenced by what others might say about him.

As to the further prosecution of his acquaintance, he was somewhat puzzled. Though by no means of a bashful nature, he hesitated about risking another call where such visitations seemed most unexpected, if not unwelcome. Time for calling anywhere, Charlie had little or none that week, after he had fairly entered upon his studies. Although he did not "consume the midnight oil," it was after nine o'clock before his books were laid aside, and he was

ready to fall into such sound sleep as only happy, healthy youth can enjoy.

After this week of constant occupation, Saturday, with its holiday hours, was most welcome. Breakfast was hardly over, when Charlie produced a new pair of skates, and declared his intention of having enough good exercise to take the chill out of him for a week to come.

The boys on the neighbouring pond soon found out that the new scholar was likely to rank No. 1 amongst the skaters, as well as in his classes. Such cutting of letters, such skilful manœuvres, had not often been seen on Meedville pond.

The school-bell at length called home the merry party to dinner. Tutor and pupils vanished like ice in a thaw. Charlie stopped to take a few more successful turns after the coast was clear, and there was no danger of knocking over small boys and unskilful skaters, who did not

know how to keep out of other people's way.

Dinner, however, was not a matter of entire indifference to Charlie Clement, and he, too, turned his face homewards. He had not gone far on his return, when he saw an old woman stepping cautiously along the slippery path, at some distance before him. She had a basket on her arm, which, though evidently not heavy, made it more difficult for her to keep her balance. The wooden cane that she carried was but a poor security against a downfall on the treacherous ice which everywhere covered the ground. At length, after executing what seemed for the moment some extraordinary dancing steps, she fell, while the basket and stick deserted her, and she lay helpless on the ground.

Charlie was at her side in a moment; but it was in vain that he tried to raise her.

"Oh la! I am done for! Dear! dear!" she exclaimed. "Now I never! What shall I do?"

"Do? why just get on my team here," said a cheerful voice at her side.

The speaker, a rough-looking countryman, was driving a wood-cart; and with a loud "Whoa" to his horses, he jumped down and began to suit his actions to his words. "Never fear, Mrs. Brown; you'll do well enough. You just got hoisted; that is all. Here now; so!" And his strong arms placed her on the cart, and leaned her against the load.

"Oh, oh! Jack—what's to become of my basket? What's *he* to do without his clothes, and Sundaycoming? You could drive round Meedville, I s'pose?"

"How I wish I could, Mrs. Brown," said the same hearty voice; "but you know I'm not my own master, and Farmer Watkins don't let us idle our time."

"No more he don't, true enough!" said the old woman, significantly. "I could lie by, to-morrow bein' Sunday; but what's to become of the clothes?"

"To whom do they belong?" asked Charlie, giving a look at the great basket.

"They're his'n, the preacher's, of course. I don't wash for nobody else," said the woman.

"Mr. Mayer, do you mean?" asked Charlie, brightening.

"Yes, child; asking questions don't help, though," said the old woman, fretfully.

"But I mean to do more," said Charlie, taking up the basket: "I'll take them home for you."

"And I'll see to the old woman; so here goes;" and Jack Tyler raised his whip, as if to warn his horses to start.

"Stop, stop, where do you live?" said Charlie, addressing the woman.

"That ain't no odds!" was the short answer.

"The first red house in among the pines, a piece along this road," said the man. "Shame, Mrs. Brown, to speak so to the young gentleman. She'll want looking after, likely enough," he added, in a whisper not meant for Mrs. Brown's ear.

"I ain't too deaf to hear that," said the old woman, with a keen look; but it was plain that the words had escaped her.

Jack Tyler did not stay for any more conversation. He went his way; and Charlie turned towards Meedville, with the great basket on his arm.

Charlie Clement never troubled himself as to who laughed at him. All the boys in the village might have been hooting at him for carrying a washerwoman's basket, and he would not have cared. He was not naturally sensitive, and moreover, when he was sure he was doing a kind action, the

opinion of the world was of little consequence to him. He stood up, therefore, on the step of Mr. Mayer's boarding-house on the main street, not noticing the crowd of boys who were coming down the side-walk, full of holiday fun. A shower of snowballs first apprized him of their approach ; and cries of "How much do you ask a dozen ?" " Here goes the washer-boy !" &c., sounded in his ears.

" Six shillings a dozen ! six shillings a dozen, my boys !" sang out Charlie, in a merry tone.

A face was seen for a moment at a lower window, and then the door was thrown open wide, and Mr. Mayer appeared.

The crowd of boys dispersed in a moment, and Charlie was about to give up his basket, when Mr. Mayer said, quite heartily, " Come in, come in." He had not forgotten the bright, pleasant face, that had looked so warmly at him the Monday before.

Charlie did step in ; but it was only to explain how he became bearer of the basket, and to say that he had now no time to spare, as his aunt's dinner-hour had arrived.

"I want to go and see Mrs. Brown," said Mr. Mayer, thoughtfully. "Do you know where she lives?"

"I could find it, I think. I mean to go there this afternoon," said Charlie, promptly.

"Then we will go together, if you like it," said Mr. Mayer.

"I should like it very much," said Charlie.

"At three o'clock, then, you will call for me," said Mr. Mayer.

"At three o'clock, sir. Good-bye, sir," was Charlie's reply.



CHAPTER IV.

OLD KATY BROWN.

THREE o'clock found Charlie Clement punctually at Mr. Mayer's door, and the Curate was there to meet him.

"I have often wanted to go to see Old Katy Brown, but she never seemed to like the idea," said the Curate, as they walked along.

"We may not get the pleasantest welcome in the world," said Charlie, smiling; "but the farmer's man seemed to think she might need help for all that."

Charlie had often been with his mother to the homes of the poor, and to him the visit seemed quite a common occurrence.

With Mr. Mayer, the case was different. He had gone from a public school to Cambridge. Motherless from his birth, he had never known the sweet joys of home, or the innocent pleasures of society. No loving hand had led him to the haunts of poverty, and taught him to minister to the poor.

Yet God had chosen Marshall Mayer to be peculiarly His servant, and the messenger of His mercy. The studious senior at college had become an earnest Christian; and when the world offered him a sphere where his talents might make for him a great name, he had chosen the ministry of Christ as his calling, and given up every object in life, save that of serving his heavenly Master.

While Mr. Mayer had been pronounced dry in the pulpit, and shy and unsociable in private life, his heart had been burning with a desire to do good. He had not been

silent in his closet. Earnestly, faithfully, he had prayed to be made a fit instrument for the heavenly work, and to be guided in the path of usefulness. Such prayers are never unanswered. Marshall Mayer might seem for a time an unprofitable servant, yet he would not be driven out of the vineyard in shame and disgrace. He had to overcome the effects of a life of seclusion, and a natural sensitiveness that was his constant scourge, ere he could be a useful pastor. Would he succeed?

Mr. Mayer found it a real pleasure to be walking through the clear cold air, with his cheerful companion at his side. With a lad like Charlie, his diffidence was not in his way, and conversation flowed naturally on. They had passed the village, and were on the country road, when Charlie asked,

“Is there to be a confirmation held here soon, sir?”

"The bishop will visit us in February, but I do not know whether there will be any persons to be confirmed," said the Curate, with a painful blush.

"I hope there will be one," said Charlie, and he took Mr. Mayer's hand as he spoke.

The boy's frank face was full of earnest feeling that was not to be mistaken.

"We must know each other better," said Mr. Mayer, with a hearty grasp of the hand that had been placed in his. "I hope that you may be that one, and be ready for the holy rite."

These few confidential words seemed to have placed Mr. Mayer and Charlie upon a different footing. The shy clergyman found himself talking freely to the boy at his side, of his hopes and his wishes, his purposes and his prayers.

Charlie felt the force of the deep piety that seemed to well up from his companion's

heart, and his own resolution to devote himself to his Master's service was strengthened and redoubled.

Katy Brown's red house among the pines was easily found, and there, at the window, sat Katy herself, knitting away as if nothing had happened.

"We will go in now that we are here," said Mr. Mayer, who, having screwed up his courage to the visit, was not willing to give it up.

Their knock was answered by a cry of "Come in," but no one appeared at the door.

The visitors obeyed, and found themselves in a single room, which was Katy's dwelling-place, her house truly; for it had a roof over it, and a chimney to carry up the smoke from her pipe and her fire.

The pipe Katy now laid aside, and through her horn spectacles she looked up

inquiringly at her visitors. The glance satisfied her as to who they were, and she hastened to say,

"Were not the clothes right, sir—eh?" and she gave a doubtful look at Charlie.

"All right, Katy," said Mr. Mayer, helping himself to a seat, Charlie following his example. "All right; but I was afraid you were not right after your fall. Are you lame yet?"

"No more than I always am," said Katy, quickly. "Old folks don't expect to be very active."

"And yet you take this long, cold walk every week. I had no idea you lived so far from the village," said Mr. Mayer, kindly.

"How should you know? You never were here before," said Katy.

"I thought you did not care to have visitors," said the clergyman, truthfully.

"No more I don't," said Katy; "but now you are come, put up your feet to the fire afore you start away."

Mr. Mayer accepted the strangely offered courtesy, and drew his chair nearer to the wide chimney-corner.

"Are you not lonely here sometimes, Mrs. Brown?" he said.

"Like enough, I am. Buryin' children ain't a cheerful business, and I've done enough of it in my day; but I shall be goin' soon," was the muttered reply.

"Going to a better country, I hope," said Mr. Mayer, kindly.

"No such a thing! I ain't one of the good ones," said the old woman. "I never was, and I'm too old now. I needn't expect nothin' better than I deserve."

The free, full forgiveness that Christ offers to sinners, was present to the young clergyman's mind. On that he built his own hope, and he longed to bring it home to

the poor old creature before him, but she would not give him time.

"It ain't no use!" she broke in upon him as his lips parted. "It ain't no use. I've worried and fretted all along of the years that is gone. If I was young, I'd begin again. Take the right start, boy," she said, turning suddenly to Charlie. "Take a right start. Old folks can't learn new ways."

"I want to start right," said Charlie, earnestly.

The conversation was here interrupted by a loud double knock, followed by the immediate sound of Jack Tyler's heavy step on the floor.

Jack started back when he saw the visitors, but determined, nevertheless, to do his errand. With a side bow to Mr. Mayer, before speaking, he turned to Katy, and said, "It's like to be slippery as ever in the morning, Mrs. Brown; I shall go to

church in the old cart, and will take you if you like. Will you go?"

"Like enough! like enough, Jack! But here, as you're in the way of helping, maybe you'll give these folks a lift," and she looked significantly at her visitors.

It seemed that Katy was tired of her company, yet she was half-pleased at their visit, too.

"If you can ride standin', sir, I'd be glad to have you on my cart," said Jack, with a bow to Mr. Mayer, that swept round far enough to include Charlie in the invitation.

"Thank you, thank you, we won't refuse such an offer," said Mr. Mayer. Then, going up to Katy he shook her withered hand, and said, in a low earnest voice, "Good-bye, Mrs. Brown; remember it is never too late to begin a new life."

The old woman shook her head, but made no answer.

They saw her wrinkled face at the window, watching them as they mounted the cart, and Jack said, "She's glad to see you, for all she's so queer. The poor thing leads a lonesome life, and she likes to see somebody now and then, if it's only to say a cross word to."

Jack stood up firmly on his cart, with the reins in one hand and the whip in the other, but Mr. Mayer and Charlie had to hold fast to the side of the rude vehicle, to keep their footing. Bump, bump, they went over the rough masses of frozen snow, and for a time conversation was quite impossible. Mr. Mayer had food enough for thought. He was dwelling on the sight he had just witnessed—an aged human being, ready to sink into the grave, without hope, without one cheering ray to lighten the dark valley.

This painful subject so completely occupied his mind, that he at first did not even

notice the conversation that arose between Charlie and the young countryman, as soon as they were on a smoother portion of the road.

Charlie was a lover of out-of-door sports, and was interested in all Jack could tell him of the fish in a trout-stream a mile or so away, or of the game that might be started in the very woods through which they were driving.

Then followed anecdotes of dogs, and Charlie grew quite animated in speaking of a former pet of his, who was so constantly with him that he had to be locked up on Sunday morning to keep him from following his master to Sunday-school.

"Sunday-school!" said Jack, thoughtfully. "I always wished I'd a went when I I was a boy."

"We had a nice Bible-class at home, where there were two or three fellows as old as you," said Charlie.

Mr. Mayer had heard nothing while the talk was of game and dogs, but now a subject was touched upon more in unison with his own thoughts, and he became conscious of what was going on around him.

"A Bible-class, did you say, Charlie?" and at the moment the thought struck the clergyman that such an undertaking might be an instrument for good in his own parish.

"Yes, a Bible-class; our curate taught it; and how we all did enjoy it!"

Mr. Mayer was silent a moment. "I have no aptness in teaching. I never took a grown-up class. I am afraid it would be a failure," he thought. Still conscience whispered, "You had better try. God can give strength for anything it is His will that we should do. Here seems to be an opening. Go forward."

"We might have an adult Bible-class here," said Mr. Mayer, thoughtfully.

"Oh, I should like it so much," said Charlie, heartily; "and you would go, wouldn't you?" he added, turning to Jack.

"I'd be a poor scholar enough," said Jack, giving a doubtful look at the clergyman.

"No one is a poor scholar who really wants to learn," said Mr. Mayer. "We will meet at my study to-morrow evening, and try to make a beginning."

"I'll be there, never fear," said Jack, decidedly.

At this moment they reached a side road, turning off just as the scattered houses betokened the entrance to Meedville.

"I go this way," said Jack, turning his horses' heads towards the corner, and bringing them to a full stop.

"Then we must get off, and thank you for helping us so far on our way," said Mr.



Mayer, stepping upon the crisp snow as he spoke.

Away drove Jack, whistling as he went, while Mr. Mayer and Charlie walked on, side by side, talking of the Bible-class, until they reached the clergyman's door.

A bonnet had been thrust out of that same door every five minutes for the last half-hour, and a face within it had looked eagerly up the street. The last look seemed to have been satisfactory, as it descried Mr. Mayer approaching, for the door was shut decidedly, and bonnet and wearer disappeared to the portions of the house where strangers were inadmissible.

"It is almost supper-time, I declare," said Mr. Mayer, looking wistfully at Charlie; "won't you stop and take a cup of tea with me?"

"Not to-night, I thank you, sir. Aunt expects to have some company for me at home," said Charlie; and with an affection-

ate shake of the hand, he bade the curate good-bye.

Mr. Mayer's small study looked particularly attractive to him that evening. Perhaps it was because his good landlady, Mrs. Toombs, had taken the opportunity to give it a cleaning during his absence; perhaps it was because he was cheered by the knowledge that at last one of his parishioners was turning towards him with affectionate confidence. Even the tea-table seemed to him to have a more attractive air than usual, though Mrs. Toombs maintained her customary silence. Mrs. Toombs about her domestic duties, in her little brown hood and stout apron, seemed quite another woman than Mrs. Toombs waiting, in her clean white cap and black alpaca dress—so entirely a different person that she did not seem to dare to open her lips, lest she should speak out of character. At any rate, something always kept her silent

in the minister's presence. She filled the curate's cup with tea before he perceived it was empty, and kept his plate supplied with such fare as the table afforded, while he went on eating abstractedly, lost in his own thoughts.

A slight rattling near the tea-tray was a general indication that tea was over, and he obeyed this hint as regularly as he did the bell that announced the meal in a state of readiness.

Mr. Mayer was very, very busy in his study that evening. Sermon after sermon he glanced at—none would suit him for the morrow. It was late before he saw what was before him ; he must write, he must prepare a message that would reach at least one heart among his people ; and after earnest prayer to Him who was to send that message, Mr. Mayer took his pen in hand.

The clock ticked not for him ; not for

him was the noise of the passer-by. He was lost, absorbed in the declaration of the the good news to mankind—a Saviour dying for the world, an ascended Lord calling all the weary unto Him.



CHAPTER V.

POOR FUN.

AUGUSTA BERRIDGE was in the parlour, standing before the mirror. It was plain that she considered herself in full dress, in the sense of uncommonly well-dressed, and was altogether satisfied on that account. Augusta was wearing, for the first time, a skirt that swept the floor as she walked, and she had promenaded the room two or three times, looking over her shoulder to see the half a quarter of a yard of blue silk trail along the carpet. Annie, meanwhile, was equally occupied in endeavouring to catch glimpses of the great bow which tied her new sash.

They both started and looked a little

ashamed, as Charlie came in upon them, fresh from his long walk.

"Why, Charlie ! you are not dressed !" said Augusta in surprise.

"Am I late ?" said Charlie, looking at his watch in a manly way, as if he had worn it always (he had had it a month). "Half-past five ! I did not think it was so late. Moonlight and twilight coming nearly together misled me."

It did not take Charlie Clement long to make his toilet. With him, it was a simple matter of business ; to be well done, of course, but not to receive any unnecessary amount of thought. He was in the parlour before the first violent ring at the door announced that one of the guests had arrived.

The new-comer, Master Harry Dewitt, needed no one to introduce him. It was plain that he and Augusta were old acquaintances, and Charlie he had already seen at school.

Harry Dewitt was very tall for fourteen, and he did not seem ashamed of his height, for he held up his head, and was as straight as a soldier on parade.

"Where were you this afternoon, that you did not go skating?" said Harry, taking a comfortable chair, and sitting himself in it.

"I walked into the country with Mr. Mayer," said Charlie, frankly.

"With Mr. Mayer!" said Harry, holding up both hands. "I don't envy you the job."

"That's the kind of business that suits Charlie," said Augusta, laughing. "He pretends to be very much pleased with Mr. Mayer."

"I do like him heartily," said Charlie, warmly. "I wish I could see more of him."

Harry gave a low whistle, and Augusta shrugged her shoulders.

The boys and girls now came in by twos

and threes, until all the guests had arrived. Thirteen bright young faces were gathered round the table, all full of life and merriment.

Harry Dewitt was about to say what he considered a capital thing, when Augusta gave him a sudden nudge, and pointed significantly at Charlie.

Charlie was standing opposite to his aunt. Mrs. Berridge waved her hand, and there was a moment of silence.

In a few simple words Charlie returned thanks for the blessings showered by the Divine hand, and then he took his seat, as unembarrassed as if he had but spoken to some human being at his side. Charlie had so long been accustomed to saying grace at his mother's table, that it seemed to him a kind of matter of course, a pleasant part of the meal, not to be omitted. Mrs. Berridge had been enough at Mrs. Clement's to be aware of this fact, and now,

at her own table, she was glad to see carried out what she considered a proper usage, an excellent form, so she desired Charlie to say it.

Charlie Clement had been but a single week at Meedville, yet he was beginning to have his influence there. The slightest thread casts a shadow, and even a young person is always doing something, for good or evil, by his example.

A bold, determined, upright spirit like Charlie's, always had its admirers and its imitators. The best scholar and the best skater in the academy must wield a power strong for good or evil.

This short, simple prayer, had been for Charlie a kind of public profession, telling plainly on which side he stood. Did he lose the respect of his companions by it? There were two or three who smiled, and one little girl, more silly than the rest, had trouble to suppress a senseless giggle ; but

the effect on most of the company was to make them feel that Charlie Clement was a person to be looked up to, a person who knew his duty, and dared to do it.

Augusta Berridge had a great store of games at her command, and was herself most skilful in playing them all. There was no lack of fun among the young people, and Charlie Clement's cheerful, natural laugh was heard again and again.

At length a new game was proposed. One of the company was to go out, and return personating some character, whom the rest were to guess from the representation.

Harry Dewitt had paraded the room

“ With head erect, you fancy how,
Arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow,
Oppressive with its mind,”

until all had shouted “ Napoleon !”

Charlie Clement with a lantern in his hand, had peered into every face, and had



been hailed as Diogenes seeking an honest man. Aristides, writing his own name on a shield, and Anne Boleyn offering her slender neck to the executioner, had all been personated and recognized.

It was now Augusta Berridge's turn to go out. She soon returned, wearing an old cloth cloak, that hid even the much-admired trailing dress. A tall beaver hat was on her head. She had but to walk across the room, in a slow, peculiar gait, when cries of "Mr. Mayer! Mr. Mayer!" were heard from all sides of the room; but with this she was not content, but began, in a voice the exact counterpart of Mr. Mayer's, to say, "Dearly beloved brethren—"

"Now that is too bad, Augusta!" said Charlie, indignantly. "Mr. Mayer is our minister, and you owe him respect on that account, if you do not like him."

Augusta threw down the cloak and hat,

and exclaimed, "I don't see why I may not have a little fun at his expense, if he is a minister !"

"The king of a country revenges the disrespect offered to his herald, and a clergyman is the herald of the King of kings, and should be treated accordingly. I use my mother's words," said Charlie, warmly. "I think you owe some respect to the office, Augusta, whatever you may think of the man !"

"What is all this ?" said Mrs. Berridge, coming in at the moment.

"Only Charlie giving us a sermon," said Augusta, laughing.

"Go on, Charlie ; I should like to be a hearer," said Mrs. Berridge, taking a seat on the sofa.

"No ! no ! let us play Elements !" said Annie, who was impatient to have the frolic recommenced. The sight of an approaching tray called off her attention, and pyra-

mids of ice-cream were soon the objects of general interest.

The company now broke up into little circles, and Charlie had an opportunity to carry out a plan which he had had in his mind all the evening.

"Augusta was too hard on Mr. Mayer," said Harry Dewitt.

"Indeed she was," said Joseph White, the oldest boy in the company.

The conversation having turned upon the clergyman, after speaking affectionately of him, Charlie mentioned the Bible-class, and actually obtained a promise from Harry and Joseph, at least to try it for the first evening. Not that Harry and Joseph had the slightest desire to improve in the best of knowledge. Their Sunday evenings were dull at home ; this would be an excuse for going out, and "might not, after all, be so bad," as they said to each other on their way home.

The Bible-class—that was the last thing in Charlie Clement's mind that night; not the frolic of the evening, not angry feelings towards Augusta; but the Bible-class, a new opportunity of improvement, a new Sunday joy, a new step on the heavenly road.



CHAPTER VI.

GOOD SEED.

THE Sunday morning service was over, and the people of Meedville were scattering away to their homes. Mr. Mayer had preached on the encouraging words of our Saviour, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." Simply, tenderly, earnestly, this blessed promise had been urged upon the attention of the hearers. The old, burdened with many years of sin, and the child 'just beginning to struggle with its evil heart, were called upon to accept the merciful invitation of Jesus, and trust themselves to Him.

Annie Berridge had soon found out that Cousin Charlie was fond of children, and

was never better pleased than when he had her at his side, or on his knee. That morning, he had passed a pleasant hour with her, telling her Bible-stories, and when she left him full of thanks for his kindness, he had won from her a promise "to be a good girl at church, and try to listen to the sermon."

Annie had kept her promise, and Mr. Mayer's faithful words had for the first time stirred in her heart a yearning to be one of the Saviour's little ones, a wish to know something more of the meek and lowly Jesus. Augusta had not thought of listening either to the service or the sermon. Though bodily present during the time of solemn worship, her mind was far away, dwelling on the plans and pleasures of the week to come.

A habit of inattention at church! A trifling sin, as some would try to think it. Is it a trifling sin to insult the Most High in His own sanctuary? Is it a matter of no

consequence to shut the ears to the voice of prayer, and turn the thoughts from the words of exhortation that might win the heart to better things? One great avenue of good, one great chance of improvement is taken away, when listless inattention becomes a habit in church.

Augusta was in her usual frivolous state when she left the church-door, and out of the abundance of her heart her mouth spoke.

Annie paid but little attention while her remarks were on the dress of acquaintances in the neighbouring pews, but when she began to speak of Mr. Mayer, her attention was gained.

"I do wish Mr. Mayer would go away, and somebody more interesting would come. My head fairly ached before the sermon was over. I don't believe he knows what he is talking about himself."

Thoughtless words, Augusta would have

called them ; wicked words they were. Augusta would not have willingly pained her little sister's body, even by the scratch of a pin, yet she was now doing her soul a fearful wrong. Annie looked up to Augusta as much smarter and wiser than herself, and she felt ashamed that she had been moved by what Augusta seemed to think so tiresome. Her half-formed resolutions to be better were checked, the tender feeling at her heart passed away, and she was ready to add her idle words to those her sister was uttering.

Those gossiping talks at the church-door, those needless criticisms on the sermon, their evil work will not be fully known until the judgment-day. If you cannot leave God's house yourself in a grave frame of mind, have pity on your neighbours, and do not drive away their good thoughts by your foolish conversation. If you have found the sermon dull and tiresome, keep back your

complaints of weariness ; the message which has not reached you may have touched a tender chord in the heart of your companions. Your disrespectful remarks on the preacher may render his labours useless just when they were taking effect. "But when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

This "snatching away" of the good seed at the church-door and by the way-side, is truly Satan's work. Who would wish to work for and with the Evil One ?

This was not Augusta Berridge's desire or intention, but what mischief may they not do, who never utter the prayers, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," "Set a watch, O Lord, before the door of my lips !"

There was no more true worship for little Annie that day, and when she bade Charlie good night, he saw that the tender, better

look, that had stolen over her face at church in the morning, was utterly gone.

Charlie had had a busy day. His Bible had been almost constantly in his hand. He had his usual reading in a course pointed out for him by his mother, and then there was the Bible-class lesson, he wanted to be prepared on that.

Mr. Mayer had declared it his intention to make the "Christ of the Old Testament" the subject of his lessons, and Charlie had been puzzling over the Books of Moses to find some traces of the promised Saviour. For prophecies he was looking, and he was quite discouraged at meeting so few of them.

Charlie was very familiar with the Scriptures, and he had perhaps fancied that he should astonish Mr. Mayer by his knowledge. Charlie Clement had his own faults, just those that naturally rose from his energetic, self-confident nature.

Mr. Mayer sat in his little study, with two candles on the table before him. Mrs. Toombs had made up her mind that some new plan was on foot, and when Charlie Clement rang the bell at seven o'clock, she would by no means permit her "hired girl" to go to the door. Indeed, the duty of answering the bell, Mrs. Toombs generally preferred to perform herself. She felt herself mistress in her own castle, and so bound to look well to the out-posts.

Four times the bell had rung, and the four lads had appeared, and then Mrs. Toombs was left to quiet and curiosity for the rest of the evening.

Mr. Mayer had spoken in the pulpit till he was quite accustomed to it, but there was something that roused all his diffidence at the idea of having young faces so near to him. This feeling vanished, however, when Charlie Clement came in, with his frank, pleasant manner, counting on the

three members of the Bible-class as so many treasures in which he was part owner.

Mr. Mayer had never felt more solemn in his life, than when he knelt down with the four boys to ask the blessing of God on his new undertaking. When he closed with the Lord's Prayer, Charlie Clement joined him, and the curate's heart thrilled with pleasure, as Jack Tyler's deeper tones were heard in the well-known petition. It is hard to talk of one's mother and one's home to uninterested hearers, much harder it is to speak of Christ and heaven to unresponsive listeners. It was cheering to Mr. Mayer to hope that at least half of his little class were ready to hear what he had to say.

At the Garden of Eden the lesson began. Mr. Mayer made the boys mark all the description of its beauty that is given, and then turn to the description of that second



garden of bliss, promised in the Revelations to the followers of Jesus.

How were Adam and Eve, when driven from Paradise, to hope to walk by the River of the Water of Life, and eat of the fruit of that tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations?

The promise given to our first parents sprang to Charlie's lips, and Mr. Mayer's smile told him he was right :

"The seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The Son of Man should triumph over the devil."

That Christ, suffering for sinners, might have been made known to Adam, Charlie had never thought ; and when Mr. Mayer dwelt upon Abel's offering of a lamb, and Adam and Eve knowing their son's sacrifice to be a sign of the coming Redeemer, Charlie's eye brightened, and he exclaimed,

"Oh, how beautiful! I like to think of

that. I have always been very sorry for Adam!"

"We all try an experiment somewhat like the one through which Adam passed. That is, we find out for ourselves that we cannot stand temptation. No one is ready to give himself up wholly to Christ, to be redeemed and sanctified, till he feels, like Adam, that he deserves to be driven from Paradise, and shut out by the angel with the flaming sword," said Mr. Mayer.

Jack's eyes were fixed on the speaker, but Charlie's were cast down. Had he ever fully realized that he was utterly unworthy of salvation? The question was not to leave him at once, it was to abide in his heart, demanding a fair and full answer.

Mr. Mayer had resolved that the Bible-class should have but a short meeting. The hour he had fixed upon had passed, yet no one looked pleased when the curate's Bible was closed, and the lesson



was over. Even Harry and Joseph had been intellectually interested ; but Jack and Charlie had felt their souls moved and enlightened.

So sweetly rose the hymn that closed the exercises, that Mrs. Toombs stole into the hall to catch its sounds, and the passers-by owned it as most welcome on a Sunday evening.



CHAPTER VII.

HOMELESS.

THREE weeks had passed pleasantly away for Mr. Mayer. He was getting better acquainted with his people. At Katy Brown's cottage he was a frequent visitor; with Jack Tyler he had many pleasant talks by the way, to which the Saviour, approving, listened. Charlie Clement was giving his curate the sunshine of his warm affection, and more than one friendly hand was reached out to the curate in his daily walks.

Saturday night had come, and full of thankfulness Mr. Mayer had gone to rest. His sleep was not to be uninterrupted. At midnight he was roused by the cry of fire,

and by the sudden flashing of red light upon his window. Yes, fire in all its terrors was near him. Hastily dressing himself, he ran to the scene of desolation and distress. Mrs. Toombs' house was one of a row of old wooden buildings that were crowded together along the street. The most remote of these dwelling-houses was now in flames. The cry that roused the curate had fallen on the ears of many of his people, and a crowd had already gathered, a helpless crowd, without an engine or an adequate supply of buckets.

Some effort was made to subdue the flames, but the pressing immediate necessity seemed to be to save the inhabitants from a miserable death, and to secure some of their property before it was too late. Mr. Mayer was foremost among those who plunged, amidst fire and smoke and falling timbers, to seek children and aged sleepers and to save the little all of the sufferers.

So rapidly the fire moved on, that Mrs. Toombs' house was in danger before the fire had consumed the building where it originated. Confused and terrified, the poor woman could do nothing but hold fast to her silver spoons and cry out for help. Mr. Mayer calmly lent his aid, and saw a portion of her furniture removed before it was too late. The roof fell in at last, with a crash.

Mr. Mayer had few earthly treasures, yet his books were precious to him. In his eagerness to save those who were in danger, and to help the distressed widow with whom he had made his home, he had forgotten them.

Now a cheerful voice at his side exclaimed, "Your books are safe, Mr. Mayer. I looked after them as soon as I saw how the fire was spreading. They are all at our house."

Charlie Clement enjoyed that moment,

and the "Thank you! thank you, Charlie!" that followed.

There was no lack of homes for the houseless that night. Beds of straw were exchanged for beds of down, and the rich made the poor welcome. Mrs. Toombs, however, preferred to walk a mile into the country, to "stay with one of her well-wishers," she said, rather than to accept Mrs. Berridge's invitation to follow the clergyman to her house.

Sunday morning came: the bell announced the hour of the accustomed service. This was surely no day on which to omit the voice of prayer and thanksgiving. Yet Mr. Mayer was weak and weary; his store of sermons had perished in the flames.

"What will Mr. Mayer do? he will break down certainly," said Augusta Berridge to her mother, as she took her seat in the pew.

Mrs. Berridge bowed her head, and managed to say, "We shall see," without any of the stir of a whispered conversation.

Never had Mr. Mayer so wholly lost himself in the service. The prayers he had so often spoken, came from his lips like free breathings of his own devotional feelings. Self was forgotten in the duty of the present moment.

The time for the sermon came. While others had been sleeping away the fatigue and excitement of the fire, Mr. Mayer had been deep in meditation and earnest in prayer. He could have stood up that day before assembled nations, and opened his mouth, confident that it would be given unto him what to say in honour of his Divine Master.

Augusta Berridge cast her eyes round the congregation as Mr. Mayer entered the pulpit. Many who had been wont to re-

turn her significant glances, were now looking towards the clergyman, as if they were expecting to receive a message which it was all-important for them to hear. Charlie Clement's eyes were cast down; he was silently praying that the Spirit of God might so guide and direct the speaker, that his words should be "words spoken in season," to bring much joy to many hearts.

Ah, if the critical hearers would cease to be on the watch for defects, and pray for him who is about to address them, then, indeed, might the preached Word of God become a mighty engine for good.

Calmly Mr. Mayer gave out his text—"The Son of Man had not where to lay his head." The beggared and houseless were gathered in the church that day, with those who had tenderly felt for neighbours thrust from their homes, and families suddenly left destitute.

The Saviour, a pilgrim without a refuge,

was brought before them, and every eye was fixed, every ear was ready to listen.

Jesus, the King of Heaven, seemed once more among them, sympathizing with the distressed, and cheering His true children to acts of kindness. Jesus, the ascended Lord, was calling on the homeless of earth to share His home in the skies, to ensure a place in the heavenly mansions, where sorrow cannot come.

Never had divine truth been so preached from that pulpit; never had those hearers so welcomed the good seed in honest hearts. There was no gossip at the church-door that day. Satan snatched away no good seed by idle chat by the wayside.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FALL.

CHRISTMAS had showered its gifts in the lap of childhood, and breathed its whispers of sacred comfort to the more way-worn pilgrims of earth. The New Year had opened with its halo of hope, and its rainbow of good resolutions.

Two months had passed since Charlie Clement left his home in the city, and came to stay with his aunt.

His mother's kind, judicious influence no longer surrounded him like a protecting mantle. The freedom from the faults of most boys of his age, which he had fancied to be the result of his own better balanced character, or the natural offspring of his

principles, was to be sorely tested. The manliness which had been most attractive when it had developed in a son, guarding and sustaining a widowed mother, became less agreeable in the boy, left his own master, and ungoverned even by a soft maternal hand.

The idea of his own power and strength to do all, and know all, daily increased in Charlie. Augusta made sport of him, and called him "Mr. Pomposity," and Annie looked up to him as the wonder he seemed to think himself; but Mr. Mayer saw, with deep pain, the change that was coming over his dear young companion. His gentle warning seemed to have no effect, yet he did not despair. His quiet influence might yet do something, and that he brought to bear, by being much in the society of the youthful parishioner, who was so dear to him. Mr. Mayer really believed that Charlie was a true child of God, and would

not be suffered to fall a prey to the temptations of one great fault. For him he prayed most fervently, yet trembled while he prayed, lest only the severest discipline should bring back the wanderer to the humility of a follower of Jesus.

The time for the confirmation was approaching, yet Charlie was not very regular at the services the curate had appointed as a preparation for that rite ; he seemed to think his preparation so thorough, that he needed no added word of counsel, no closer self-examination.

A bright Saturday, early in February, had come. The snow made white the country far and wide, and the merry chimes sounded out through the streets of Meedville, and over the glittering meadows.

Light carts and fast horses were in requisition that day, and Charlie Clement had determined to have a drive. Early in the

morning he ordered the basket carriage, with his aunt's permission, and at two o'clock he appeared at Mrs. Berridge's door, as full of merriment as if life was all careless boyhood.

Augusta soon came out, wrapped in furs, and full of smiles. Charlie was just handing her into the carriage, in his best style, when Mrs. Berridge's face appeared at the parlour window. The sash was thrown up in a moment, and the mother exclaimed,

"Charlie, Charlie! stop! You are not going to drive Black Fury?"

"Why not? I am used to horses. Never fear, aunt, I know what I am about."

"But, Augusta! I dare not trust you," began Mrs. Berridge. Charlie was by this time in his seat, and in another moment the spirited horse was moving down the street at full speed.

Mrs. Berridge cast a long, anxious glance after the little party, and did not move

from the window until the sound of the wheels died upon the ear. The keen air and the rapid motion were exhilarating, and Charlie urged on his horse at headlong speed. He had entered one of the lanes near Meedville, when wheels were heard behind them.

Augusta turned her head, and exclaimed, "It is Harry Dewitt! Don't let him pass us!"

There was no danger of any one's passing Black Fury when he was excited by the sound of horses' feet behind him. On he sped, as if unconscious of the light vehicle attached to him, while Charlie vainly endeavoured to rein him in.

They were now beyond the beaten road, and Charlie knew not which way to steer among the snowdrifts and gulleys which extended from fence to fence.

Black Fury plunged madly on—the carriage was but a plaything to the strong

horse in his excitement. He stopped not even when it turned over, and Augusta found herself lodged in a bed of snow. It would have been happy for Charlie if he had found as soft a resting-place. His arm caught in the reins as the carriage went over, and with it he was dragged along, whirling through the snow, and furrowing it as he passed. The reins broke at last, and Charlie was left senseless by the roadside.

Harry Dewitt had taken Augusta into his pony carriage with some pride ; he was not unwilling to have a little triumph over Charlie, who was particularly proud of his skill as a "whip."

Harry had no idea of following the mad course of Black Fury. "I ought not to risk Miss Augusta's life," he said to himself; and not without a feeling of shame, he turned his horse's head towards Meedville ; but Charlie was not to lack a friend in his

extremity : Jack Tyler had been out with his wood-cart, and had just turned a corner which led to the lane, when the maddened horse, which Charlie had driven, dashed past him. Jack did not stop to pursue the horse, for he felt sure that he was needed in the contrary direction. On he went, plodding as fast as he could through the deep snow, leaving his trusty horses to follow him at their own gait.

Charlie did not know whose strong arms were folded tenderly around him. He did not see the honest face that was wet with tears as it bent over him. He could not know that eager observers appeared at the windows, as he was carried through Meedville, as helpless a burden as the wood upon which he was laid. Very different were his feelings when upon that humble cart, from those at his departure, so full of pride and joy.

Charlie Clement was restored to consciousness, to find himself the tenant of a

body racked with pain, and stiffened in every limb. He knew his aunt was not fond of nursing ; he knew it cost her an exertion to be moving continually ; yet he had to see her waiting upon him, and to know that it was his own folly that had made him as helpless as an infant. She had warned him against the horse he had chosen to drive, yet he had been disobedient, and willing, presumptuously, to risk his own life and that of another. But he had been spared. Oh, that thought ! Charlie dwelt on it with deep gratitude ; but gratitude mingled with bitter repentance. In the silence of his sick room, a phantom seemed to rise before him ; a phantom from which he would gladly have turned his eyes. He saw himself, full of presumption and self-importance, and he was sick at heart. Where was the modesty that is becoming in youth ? Where was the humility, without which piety must become an empty name ?

Charlie Clement saw himself, and he was humbled in dust and ashes ; but blessed be God, when our eyes are opened to behold our own sinfulness, He pours into them the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and comforts with this vision of mercy and redeeming love.

Now came the faithful words of a friend. Mr. Mayer did not say, "Peace! peace!" until he was sure that the arrow of Heaven had pierced even to the depths of the soul. He brought home the rebuke that was needed, before he poured in the oil of consolation.

Charlie Clement had learned this lesson : —No religious habits, no faithful training, can keep the young Christian from sin. He falls when exposed to temptation, unless watching unto prayer, and upheld by the Power that sitteth in the heavens. Charlie's fall might seem little to lookers on, but he knew himself how far he had wandered

from the true spirit of a follower of Christ. Humble as a little child he lay in his sick room, while others were to enjoy the privilege of openly professing themselves servants of the "meek and lowly Jesus."



CHAPTER IX.

THE CONFIRMATION.

THE church at Meedville was crowded. Many had come merely as spectators to the confirmation service ; many more as devout worshippers. The bishop stood in the chancel. The persons to be confirmed were called on to come forward. A sunburnt youth, whose broad shoulders proved him familiar with toil, walked slowly up the aisle. No faltering thought, no fear of man, slackened his usual bold, firm tread. He moved gently, to keep pace with the aged woman who leaned on his arm.

Poor, and coarsely clad, was Katy Brown.

There was no charm in her dark and wrinkled features, yet at her Mr. Mayer looked tenderly and anxiously, as she drew near the chancel. In that worn and weary body was an immortal soul, a soul that had been brought into the fulness of the gospel light. Yes, that aged woman was the first fruits of Marshall Mayer's ministry, and he rejoiced over her with great joy. Jack he had guided and directed, but to Katy, it had been his blessed privilege to declare the truth as it is in Jesus.

Who can describe the devout interest of the faithful pastor as he heard the words, "Defend, O Lord, this thy servant, with thy heavenly grace, that she may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until she come unto thine everlasting kingdom."

For Jack there might yet be a hard struggle, a battle "unto blood" with temptation; but the old pilgrim was near her journey's

end. She had but the dark valley to pass, and she would enter into the reward purchased for the penitent by the blood of Jesus.

Oh, the riches of the mercy of Christ ! Who would not enlist under this Captain of our salvation ? Who would not labour in the vineyard of such a Lord ?



was just one of those ladies who secured
honour and wealth by her own efforts

CHAPTER X.

ANNIE'S WORK.

"It is almost worth while to have been shut up so long, to be so glad to be with you all again," said Charlie Clement, with one of his old, bright smiles.

The family circle upon which Charlie looked was indeed a cheerful one. Gathered about the centre table sat Mrs. Berridge, Augusta, and Annie, each as busy as if convinced that industry was the secret of happiness. Mrs. Berridge was knitting an Afghan, and the portion of her completed work lay across her lap, its gay stripes seeming the brighter for the brilliant gaslight that fell upon them. Mrs. Berridge was just one of those ladies who seemed

most in her place when sitting in her own drawing-room, occupied about some pretty work. There was a quiet, settled look in her figure, and a sort of repose in her face, that made one feel rested to look at her.

Augusta, on the contrary, was all animation ; when her mouth opened, her black eyes sparkled, and her slender nose seemed to grow sharper, and do its part towards the vivacious expression of her face. Augusta was drawing, and she handled her pencil with a skill that made it a pleasure to watch her.

Charlie took up the spirited head of Apollo, which she was just finishing, and gave it the glance of a connoisseur. He was about to hazard some criticisms, and to make some mythological allusions, that were more calculated to show his own powers than to please the hearers, when there was a whisper at his heart that checked him. With a well-deserved compliment on

the execution, he handed it back to Augusta, who took it with a laugh, and said,

“I think Mr. Pomposity died in your sick-room. Do you think that one of the Siamese twins will be able to live without the other—eh, Charlie?”

“I hope so,” said Charlie, gravely.

“You ought not to call Charlie names,” said Annie, looking protectingly at her cousin.

“You need not stand to your arms on all occasions, Annie, when Charlie is spoken to,” said Augusta, not very pleasantly.

“Annie and I are fast friends,” said Charlie, with a fond look at his little cousin. “Come, Annie, let me see your work?”

Annie thrust her hands under the table. Her work was truly not such as would please an artist's eye. She was embroidering, on a piece of brown broadcloth, such flowers as no botanist could have recog-

nized ; even the leaves were of angular forms, which might be sought for in vain in nature.

Annie was a fat, comfortable, tender-hearted little girl of ten, but by no means sensitive. Charlie could not account for the sudden bashfulness that had overtaken her.

At Charlie's urgent request she exhibited her work, and reluctantly owned that she was making a watch-case.

"A watch-case !" said Augusta, with a laugh ; "I thought it was a bag for some baby's silver porringer, or, perhaps, a sacred retreat for some worthy potato, to which a small specimen of the same kind had grown fast. Who is it for, pray ?"

"Let me see if it will fit," said Charlie, taking out his watch, and slipping it into the case.

"The watch is like truth, hid in a well," said Augusta. "It can't be for you,

Charlie, so draw your watch up from the depths."

"Don't say any more about it, Charlie," whispered Annie, beseechingly.

"Who will go and get my books for me?" said Charlie. "I am in a studying mood."

Annie hastened to oblige her cousin, while Augusta laughingly said,

"I wonder Mrs. Toombs allows Mr. Mayer to come here to hear your lessons. I don't think she has ever forgiven us for keeping him that whole fortnight after the fire. She is a queer being. I wonder what such people were made for?"

"Made to do some particular good work, no doubt," said Charlie. "But here come my books, and I must go to studying in earnest."

Charlie had never studied so faithfully as since Mr. Mayer had kindly offered to act as his tutor until he should be able to reappear at the school. Charlie's perfect



lessons left time enough during the appointed hour for much that was interesting in the way of explanations. Often the hour closed with a pleasant, profitable talk between the clergyman and his young parishioner, which was to leave its impression when the things of this world have passed away.



CHAPTER XI.

ANNIE'S VISIT.

THE fire which had burned Mr. Mayer's sermons, and left him without a home, had been by no means an enemy. The sermons that he had laboured over and wrought out in his study since his arrival at Meedville, had been profitable to his mind by way of discipline, but with them his heart had little to do. They were fit for the fire ; like a boy's old Latin exercises, they had fulfilled their end, and were to be cast aside for better things.

Mr. Mayer now knew his people. He loved them, he felt for their wants, and to them he spoke when he entered the pulpit, for them he wrote in his study. They knew



that they were directly addressed by a friend who had their best interest at heart, and they listened, and took home his earnest appeals and faithful counsel.

Members of the parish who had thought little of their clergyman or his home, had their sympathies called out towards him, when his wardrobe was burnt, his study furniture destroyed, and he was forced to accept the kind invitation of Mrs. Berridge to make her house his home.

Mrs. Toombs soon found a house placed at her disposal, at an uncommonly low rent, and found other hands than hers interested in providing for the curate's comfort.

No one acknowledged who had newly furnished the study. Stout farmers and country shopkeepers, who had given themselves no concern about their clergyman when he seemed comfortable, had found pleasure in relieving him in his unexpected difficulties. They knew what they had done, and they

felt an added interest in one for whom they were able to do something.

And Mrs. Berridge, had she no part in this work of love? Apparently, none; yet Mr. Mayer received through the post-office a blank envelope containing a fifty-pound note; from whom else could it have come?

These nameless kindnesses made Mr. Mayer feel that he was among friends, and his stiffness gave way to a frank and kindly manner that strengthened the pleasant relations growing up between him and his people.

Mr. Mayer was sitting in his study one morning in April. There was a timid ring at the door. Mrs. Toombs was at her post in a moment; motioning back the "hired girl," who was peeping after her, round the corner of the entry, the little woman opened the door. There stood Annie Berridge, looking by no means as calm and comfortable as usual.



"Is Mr. Mayer at home?" asked the little girl.

"Yes. What shall I tell him?" said Mrs. Toombs, standing in front of Annie.

Annie fumbled nervously at a parcel in her hand, and then repeated her question,

"Is Mr. Mayer at home?"

Mrs. Toombs was suspicious of any intercourse between her lodger and Mrs. Berridge's family. She seemed to have conceived a vague notion that there was a plan to decoy him away, which it was her duty to check in the bud. She now looked at the parcel most significantly, and said,

"Shall I give it to him?"

Annie was about helplessly to render up her treasure, when Mr. Mayer himself appeared.

It would have been a great disappointment to Annie to go away without an interview, and her face grew proportionately bright at the sight of the curate's face.

admiration bidding him that had long been

"Come in, Annie ; how do you do this morning?" he said, kindly taking her hand. The air was chilly, and there was a cheerful wood fire on the study-hearth. "Come and warm your fingers," said Mr. Mayer, drawing Annie towards the bright flame.

Mrs. Toombs fidgetted uneasily, but retreated down the hall, at length, without even speaking to the "hired girl," who was still at her post of observation.

It seemed to take Annie a great while to warm her hands. She held them up before the fire long after they were perfectly comfortable. The package had been hastily thrust into her pocket. She had given a most minute and satisfactory account of the health of all the family, before she could make up her mind to begin the ceremony of presentation. As to this same ceremony, she had given herself much thought, and had planned exactly what she would say ; now, however, her most suitable remarks

had forsaken her, and she could only stammer out,

"I made this for your watch, and so I came to bring it."

Mr. Mayer unfolded the little parcel, and took out the result of Annie's labours. Such a watch-case had not often been seen, yet Mr. Mayer looked at it with as much pleasure as if it were an exquisite work of art. He knew that love had prompted the gift, and it was very precious.

Affection was all the more welcome to Mr. Mayer, because he had been so long alone in the world, a mere student, without a family circle or a home. Affection he prized for its own sake ; he moreover knew that if he wished to lead his young parishioners Heavenward, they must place their hands lovingly and trustfully in his.

Now he looked very kindly at Annie, as he thanked her for her gift.

"See, how nicely it fits," he said, as he

placed his great silver watch in the case. "You could not have done better if you had taken its measure."

Annie looked curiously at the watch, and Mr. Mayer put it in her hand. The watch was covered with deep chasings, and was as thick as two watches, such as are now made.

"This was my grandfather's watch," said Mr. Mayer, opening it, and showing the works. Annie watched the silent motion of the wheels, while Mr. Mayer went on to say,

"So it went, tick, tick, when my good grandfather was alive. His wonderful body wore out, and was laid in the grave, yet here the watch is going still. Does it, then, last longer than a man?"

Annie looked up suddenly, as she answered.

"Yes!—no! A kind of a way."

"It lasts longer than a man's body, but

the watch has no soul to live for ever when it is worn out," said Mr. Mayer. "It is only made for use in this world. Yet how carefully we use it, what pains we take lest it should be injured! Is not a soul worth as much trouble? It needs to be guarded and kept from harm, too; but does it not need something more?"

"It needs to be made better," said Annie, modestly.

"Yes, it needs to be placed in Jesus' hands to be made pure and kept in the right way here on earth, and then it will be His in the happy home in Heaven. Does not Jesus hear when children pray, Annie?"

"I suppose so; but it seems as if He could not understand what children want, as He does grown-up people."

"Dear little Annie, you know that Jesus was once a child. You remember very well what happened yesterday. Jesus never

forgets, He cannot forget. He remembers as well now when He was a little boy at Nazareth, as you do what you saw and heard but a moment ago. He knows what it is to live in a child's body, and to have a child's troubles. He had parents to obey, and young companions to make happy. He has not forgotten a child's feelings ; He can sympathize with you when no one else can. You must learn to love Him, and to go to Him in all your joys and troubles."

As Mr. Mayer closed, Annie looked up earnestly into his face, and said, with a great effort, three simple words—"I am trying." Three simple words they were, yet they filled the heart of the curate with pure joy. Poor little Annie ! it cost her such a struggle to make this confession, that her eyes flowed out suddenly. It was, to her, a profession of Christ—her first owning to any human being that she wanted to take Him for her Master. Mr. Mayer knelt down

with the little girl, and spoke for her to the loving Saviour who was once a child.

When Annie went forth from that room, it was with the pleasant thought that Jesus was to be with her by the wayside and in her home.



CHAPTER XII.

A BLACK SHADOW.

FARMER WATKINS'S eyes were heavy with sleep ; he was for once weary—not with working, but with watching. He could have borne harvesting, with only a single hand to help him, better than this standing by a sick-bed, day and night. A woman's business he said it was ; and yet it was plain his heart was in it.

Farmer Watkins was a bachelor, and not much in the habit of looking out for other people's comfort ; but there was one man on his place who had managed to get a hold upon him which seemed to triumph over selfishness. Farmer Watkins loved and respected Jack Tyler, and he could not see

him stretched on a sick-bed without many a pang. Jack had been seized with a malignant fever ; two days and nights his employer had been at his side, nursing him as tenderly as was consistent with his rough hands and rougher ways.

Now night was settling over the farmhouse, and sleep seemed threatening to take an equally firm hold of the watcher. Farmer Watkins paced the room, shook himself, reminded himself of the medicines to be given at every half hour through the night. He looked at Jack, tossing, and murmuring strange nonsense, as the fever was on him. No ! the good fellow should have proper care : with stern determination in his face, the farmer took his seat. His eyes, notwithstanding his resolutions, were beginning to close, when there was a rap at the outer door. A hand soon beckoned the farmer from his post.

Mr. Maycr was in the hall below. He

had come, he said, to pass the night with Jack. Farmer Watkins looked at the clergyman, and exclaimed, "It's catchin', the fever is. You are worth too much to be took down that way. No, no! I can stand it a good time longer."

The farmer felt very wide awake in the fresh air of the hall, but when, a half-hour afterwards, he lay on his own bed, he slept as if he was in a trance, save that his deep snores sounded through the house like the voice of a trumpet.

Through the weary night hours sat Mr. Mayer by the bed of Jack Tyler. The sufferer knew that a gentle hand ministered to him, and now and then a strange glance of half-puzzled recognition lighted up his features.

Those ravings, those muttered words of delirium, were poor companionship in the midnight hour; yet even in them the clergyman found comfort. They were but

the upturning of a mind where evil had been allowed no resting-place, and habits of sin were strangers. Jack had fallen into a quiet doze, when, in the gray dawn, the farmer appeared at the door. Refreshed by his night's sleep, he realized all the more the kindness of the "friend in need" who had relieved him at his post, and his thanks were in proportion to his appreciation of the service rendered him.

A messenger on horseback had come with a summons for Mr. Mayer. The same fever that had prostrated the strong woodman, Jack Tyler, and closed for ever the eyes of old Katy Brown, has filled Augusta Berridge's veins with fire. Augusta's mind still had its power to think and reason ; that power but rendered more fearful the agony she endured—agony both of body and mind. Her present sufferings seemed to bring before her a faint image of what might be in store for her soul—that soul to which



she had given so little thought in her days of health. And was her mother her guide and comforter in this time of distress? Alas, for Mrs. Berridge! she knew not the Heavenly Friend after whom her daughter was feeling in the midst of a "horror of great darkness." She knew not the way to the foot of the Cross; like Augusta, she was but beginning to seek that which she should first have sought, "the kingdom of Heaven, and its righteousness."

Again and again, in Augusta's sick-room, Mr. Mayer had lifted up the voice of prayer. Where duty called, Marshall Mayer could go, though with every breath he might take in a fatal disease.

Now he urged his horse onward, as he hastened to the saddened home of Mrs. Berridge.

Annie noiselessly opened the door, and Charlie silently extended a hand to him in



the hall. To the bedside of the altered girl he was promptly led.

Where was the sparkling vivacity that had distinguished Augusta Berridge a few short weeks before? Sad, sunken eyes looked forth from her thin, pale face, and no words of sarcastic mirth came from her parched lips. Yet those lips had been able to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"—those sad eyes had been lifted to Heaven.

Mr. Mayer knew that he was in the presence of a soul trembling on the brink of eternity; and oh, how tenderly, how faithfully he pictured the blessed Jesus, coming to seek and to save them that were lost. How, like a child drawing near to a father, he drew near to God, asking His best blessings of mercy for her who so "earnestly desired pardon and forgiveness."

Would the Saviour stoop to one sinner more, and lift her soul from the dust?

Would Augusta Berridge be raised up to serve her Maker ?

Who can tell the issues of life and death ?
Who knows, lying down at evening, if he will rise in the morning ? Who knows when the petted body will sicken and die, and the neglected soul be called to account ?

This only we know, "God waiteth to be gracious." Unto us He saith, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."



CHAPTER XIII.

PURER AIR.

MEEDVILLE had been considered one of those healthy places where it is of no use for young doctors to settle. There was no part of the quiet country town given up to wickedness and dirt, those great fosterers of disease and death.

Now and then an infant was laid in its quiet tomb, like a flower dropped on the bosom of Mother Earth. Now and then a hoary head drooped as the ripened seed, and like that seed, was planted, to rise on the Resurrection morn.

Occasionally some young, fair girl, or a man in the fullness of his strength, was called to lie down and die, as if to say, in

words too startling to be mistaken, " Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day or the hour when the Son of Man cometh." So it had been at Meedville. No pestilence had ever before prevailed in the favoured spot ; and but for his own independent income, the slow-moving, cheerful-looking old doctor would have had to give up his profession, and devote himself to some more money-making business.

The sudden appearance of a malignant, contagious fever among them, had struck the people of Meedville with a fearful panic. The stout-hearted failed in this time of need ; and there were more to take the swift trains and flee from the scene of contagion, than to stand by the bed-sides of the sufferers, with the patient tenderness of a skilful nurse.

It was at this time that Marshall Mayer moved among the sick and dying, to soothe the pain-racked body, and comfort the sin-



sick soul. He had no near relations to mourn his loss ; no home would be left desolate if he were taken away. Perhaps these circumstances made it easier for him to peril his life where others dared not go ; but the great well-spring of his courage was his deep conviction that death could have no terrors for him, for *his* Lord had died.

The friends who gather round us in health, and add their joys to ours, are dear ; but dearer are those who come to us when sickness makes dreary the family hearth, and silences the voice of mirth. Ah ! how we prize the friend that comes like a sister to relieve the worn-out nurses, and give the sufferer a placid face to look upon, not yet marked with the weariness of long watching ! How we welcome the manly form that can bow at the sick-bed with a woman's tenderness, yet lends its strength, like a rock, for the helpless to rest upon !

Years of ordinary ministry might have done less to draw Marshall Mayer near to his people than did those few dark, dark weeks, when fever hung round them like a plague. They could not but love the friend who had been their human stay in the time of their visitation, and had taught them where to seek for a support that would not fail them when called to go through the deep waters of affliction, or to enter the valley of the shadow of death.

Mr. Mayer's regular, temperate life, and his vigorous constitution, had prepared him to endure great fatigue. Though Mrs. Toombs daily fretted at his exposing his valuable life, and daily looked to see him laid upon his sick-bed, he did but grow a little paler and thinner, while his face took a more and more sweetly placid expression. The good woman at length gave over her murmurings, and expended her energies in preparing cooling drinks

for fevered lips, and nourishing food for the convalescents.

Health once more began to throb in Jack Tyler's veins. Augusta Berridge, too, was coming back to life, looking like a shadow from the spirit-land. Jack was rising up to be doubly pledged to a life of usefulness, and Augusta thought her soul as much changed as her poor altered body. Her soul was changed truly; it was now her chief wish and purpose to obey and serve her Heavenly Father, rather than follow the evil promptings of her own evil nature. This change had taken place, but Augusta had her natural character to struggle with, her wrong habits to overcome. She had a work before her that could only be accomplished by watchfulness and prayer.

The cloud seemed to have passed away from Meedville, and many hearts were full of gratitude. White slabs had suddenly clustered among the moss-grown stones

of the graveyard, and mourning garments had taken the place of gay attire ; yet the scourge had proved a blessing, and “ the Lord and Giver of life ” had written many new names in His book of remembrance.



CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

CHARLIE CLEMENT was going home at last. Home ! His very heart leaped at the word. Dearer than ever seemed his mother to him, and he longed to be once more at her side. Mingled with all his joy was much regret at leaving Meedville, even for a short time. There were now many ties to bind him to his aunt's family circle, to his dear clergyman, and to the church, where he had first come forward to commemorate his Saviour's love.

Meedville would ever be dear to him ; a place around which the most delightful associations would cluster.

Charlie had been saying something like this to the family circle gathered about him on the morning of his departure.

"We shall all miss you sadly. I never had any idea before what a comfort a son might be to a widowed mother," said Mrs. Berridge, fondly.

"I can't bear to let you go," said Annie, drawing closer to her cousin, in her affectionate way. "I liked you at first, but lately you seem nicer—not so old, somehow."

"We must become as little children, if we would enter the kingdom of Heaven," said Mr. Mayer, who was enjoying the last hour of Charlie's stay with him.

"Yes!" said Charlie, earnestly, and his heart was full of humble joy. No parting gift could have been so precious to Charlie, as Annie's unconscious words. Had he then triumphed in a measure over his besetting sin? The thought was a spring to new

exertion ; new effort to seek the humility which is the crowning grace of the young Christian.

Mrs. Berridge was at this moment called out of the room. The visitor was no other than Mrs. Toombs, who modestly refused to enter the house farther than the dining-room. She no longer looked on Mrs. Berridge as her natural enemy, and had said, in her own queer way, "I was all wrong, to want nobody to care for Mr. Mayer but me. The more friends he has, the better, I say now."

This morning she had come with a basket of choice sandwiches for "Mr. Charlie to eat on the way, and to wish him good luck as the warmest-hearted boy that ever came to Meedville."

When Mrs. Berridge urged her to give her message in person, she shrunk back in dismay, and abruptly disappeared. Mrs. Toombs was still Mrs. Toombs, though

profiting by the ministration of her much-respected curate.

Mrs. Berridge returned to the breakfast parlour, and gave the basket and message to Charlie. Very welcome they both seemed.

"I like her, and I thank her," said Charlie. "We can't all be the same. Variety is the spice of life."

Augusta was going to hazard one of her old sharp remarks about Mrs. Toombs. "But we don't want pepper in puddings, or Mrs. Toombs' peculiarities in a woman," she was going to say ; but she changed her mind and was silent. Augusta had learned something about the "unruly member," and was trying hard to govern it.

"Have you everything ready, Charlie?" said Mrs. Berridge, with a motherly, anxious look.

Charlie did not resent the imputation upon his skill as a traveller, but held up

the cap in his hand, saying, "I have only this to put on, aunt."

"And that you will have to do at once, for here is the cab at the door," said Augusta. "You have been a good cousin to me, and I can't bear to spare you," she added, in a lower voice. "Your example has been a great deal to me!"

Annie had to let go her hold upon her cousin, and all the good-byes had to come to an end, for the train would not wait, and the slow cab-horse must have full time allowed it.

"I am so glad I shall have you here when I come back," said Charlie to Mr. Mayer, when they were seated in the cab.

"And I am glad you are coming back," responded Mr. Mayer. "I have never told you, Charlie, how your bright young face broke in upon my studies, and changed the mere student into something like a pastor.

Your visit was a real heart-warming to me. I shall miss you sadly."

"And what have you not done for me?" said Charlie, earnestly, "poor, self-important boy that I was. If I ever am the humble Christian I want to be, I shall have to thank you for setting me on my guard against my besetting sin."

"Dear Charlie, every character has its own peculiar faults, to be struggled against with watchfulness and prayer. I will not speak of mine; but I must say that a loving, earnest, young parishioner may do much for his clergyman, in his inner work, as well as his outward labours. God bless you, my boy, and sustain you in all your temptations until we meet again."

Very affectionate was the parting between Mr. Mayer and Charlie. Away went the happy lad to his mother and his home; back returned the clergyman to his well-beloved parish.

We need no prophet's eye to trace their future course. Each will go on as he began. Charlie will be the faithful, active, affectionate parishioner. Taking his heart in his right hand, and his purse in his left, he will devote his all to the service of his Maker, and ever be to his clergyman the tried and trusted friend; free to give his sympathy and his aid in every perplexity and every good work.

The Rev. Marshall Mayer will follow close upon the footsteps of his Divine Master. For the bodies as well as the souls of his people he will feel a tender interest. In their temporal trials, as in their spiritual need, he will be their comforter and their best adviser.

To him the hoary head will look up, his hand will lead the children in the way. He will not sink under the responsibilities of his office. Cheerfully, hopefully, he will go forward. Trusting in the Captain of

his Salvation, he will be sure to come off victorious. For him will be "laid up a crown of rejoicing," when he shall appear in the kingdom of the redeemed. For him will sound the voice of welcome at the gates of the Heavenly city.

THE END.

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